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April 24, 2012

The Honorable Darrell Issa
Chairman, House Oversight and Reform Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

And

The Honorable Elijah Cummings
Ranking Member, House Oversight and Reform Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

RE: The Digital Accountability and Transparency Act of 2011, H.R. 2146

Dear Chairman Issa and Ranking Member Cummings,

I am writing to express support for the Digital Accountability and Transparency Act (DATA), and specifically its creation of much-needed data standards for federal spending programs (sec. 3611). Data standards, like **eXtensible Business Reporting Language (XBRL), will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of analysis relating to government programs, and greatly improve transparency** in a cost-effective manner.

Wharton Research Data Services at the University of Pennsylvania has been a strong proponent of data standards. The benefits of standardized data are many – there is no ambiguity in the results or the interpretation of results; data are fully searchable and platform neutral; and data are presented in real-time. WRDS has seen the success of offering standardized tools and reporting for financial research in academics, and we support these same standards for business, nonprofit and government agencies.

In particular WRDS supports the XBRL standard. XBRL was created to make financial and performance-related data accessible, timely and relevant, and has the benefit of being fully developed, widely utilized and uniquely positioned to generate the kind of impartial data across multiple financial fields that the DATA legislation proposes. It's a cost-effective and easily implementable standard that needs no further adaptation. XBRL is a free and open standard that already exists in the market infrastructure, making it inexpensive to implement and maintain.

The XBRL data standard would be a useful and effective tool to meet the requirements of DATA.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Paul Ratnaraj
Director – Advanced Initiatives